

Rep. Sanford Bishop and Congressional Black Caucus Foundation
to hold event to raise awareness of public health crisis

ALBANY, Ga.— Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr. and the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF), in collaboration with AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals and General Mills, will host the Black Health Empowerment Project (BHEP), a national obesity education and health promotion initiative designed to educate African Americans about the relationship between obesity and chronic health conditions, on Saturday, May 27, 2006. BHEP will be held at Albany State University to bring together civic leaders, health experts and members of the community to discuss this growing public health crisis affecting adults and youth alike. The event is free and open to the public.

An estimated 77% of African American women and 61% of African American men are considered overweight or obese. Reflecting on this startling statistic, Congressman Bishop stated, "Obesity is a problem that affects individuals from all walks of life. It is my hope that through education, people will understand the importance of healthy living practices. This event will be the first step towards attacking the obesity epidemic in the Second Congressional District."

The format of the community health event moderated by Darrell Sabbs, health educator, Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital and Ce Ce Morris, on-air personality, V105 FM, will include the Healthy Living Talk Show; cooking and fitness demonstrations; nutritious food tasting; health seminars; and giveaways. Youth Becoming Healthy, community partner for the event, will offer a number of fun activities for children and the young at heart. A host of exhibitors will provide vital health-enhancing information to attendees as well as free health screenings.

"The overall health of African Americans has reached a critical state," said CBCF President Dr. Don Tharpe. "As a nonprofit organization dedicated to effecting positive and sustainable change in the African American community, CBCF has taken on the task of educating its constituency about the lifestyle changes we must make to build and sustain healthy families and healthy communities," he added.

The BHEP initiative signals a partnership between the public and private sectors—a collaboration that is crucial to fighting the obesity epidemic. Included among the experts participating in the event will be Dr. Tania Smith, Albany Area Primary Health Care, East Albany Pediatrics; Dr. Devell Young, Medical Associates of Albany; Jacqueline Jenkins, Southwest Health District; Denise Ballard, Southwest Georgia Cancer Coalition; Lula Hutchinson, Palmyra Medical Center; and Lindsey Williams, Celebrity chef and grandson of Sylvia Woods.

"We must all be committed to improving the health of our communities, and the BHEP initiative is a perfect example of that commitment," said Rich Buckley, vice president of government affairs for AstraZeneca. "AstraZeneca is dedicated to providing individuals with the information and tools that will empower families to take charge of their health."

The event will be held at Albany State University, ACAD Building, 504 College Drive, Albany, Ga. from 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. Albany will be the third stop on the 2006 tour, which is expected to

visit several cities across the country. For additional information about this BHEP event, call (866) 447-7103 or visit the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation's web site at www.cbcfinc.org.

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Established in 1976, the Foundation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy, research and educational institute focused on leadership education, public health, economic development and African globalism.